

1. Neighborhood Meetings and Public Participation in the Planning and Zoning Process

(See zoning ordinance [§ 78-201.5](#), Neighborhood Meetings, [§ 78-201.9](#), Public Notification, and [§ 78-201.13](#), Public Hearing Procedures)

The Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance User Guide series provides the public with general information on land use regulations affecting activities undertaken by the public and administered by the Herndon Department of Community Development. It is not intended to be a complete statement of all applicable regulations. Individuals are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development at 703-787-7380 for complete permitting requirements.

Why would there be a meeting in my neighborhood?

For planning and zoning purposes, a neighborhood meeting might occur because a development is proposed near or in the neighborhood. The Town Council, Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board or Heritage Preservation Review Board encourage development applicants to conduct a neighborhood meeting on an application if they determine that the proposed development could affect neighboring properties. When such a determination is made, the neighborhood meeting is hosted and conducted by the developer. Ideally, the neighborhood meeting would occur prior to, or shortly after, submittal of an application requiring a public hearing. In particular, the town strongly encourages applicants to hold at least one neighborhood meeting for a Zoning Map Amendment (rezoning) application prior to filing the application if any part of the property proposed for the Zoning Map Amendment is abutting or across the street from existing residences.

What should I expect at the meeting?

Neighborhood meetings are opportunities for informal communication between landowners, applicants, and residents who may be affected by development proposals. The purposes of the neighborhood meeting are to:

- ☐ Learn about the proposed development and application;
- ☐ Ask questions and make constructive comments;
- ☐ Hear the applicant's response to neighborhood concerns about the development proposal; and
- ☐ Identify outstanding issues, and resolve them where possible.

The neighborhood meeting should be held at a place that is generally accessible to neighbors that reside near the land subject to the application. The applicant should provide notification of the neighborhood meeting a minimum of ten days in advance of the meeting, by mail, to all landowners within 100 feet of the property, to any neighborhood organization that represents members of the public within that area, to names on the town's list of persons registered to receive notice of applications, and to the Zoning Administrator. At the meeting, the applicant should explain the development proposal and application, answer any questions, and respond to concerns neighbors have about the application and proposed ways to resolve differences. The Zoning Administrator should be present at the neighborhood meeting to answer questions related to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant should arrange for minutes to be taken during the meeting. The minutes should reflect the topics of discussion and summarize the comments made at the meeting. The minutes should be submitted to the Zoning Administrator within ten days of the meeting. In the case of a Zoning Map Amendment, the applicant must file a report of the neighborhood meeting at the time of submitting the application.

How can I become aware of more development proposals in the town?

The Code of Virginia and the Town Council require public hearings for certain development applications for the specific purpose of engaging the public in the proceedings for review and action. There are legal requirements for advertising public hearings and notifying certain parties of them. The legal ads appear weekly in the *Fairfax County Times Newspapers*.

In addition, any individual, business, or organization in the town may register to receive information about zoning-related applications. Registration allows persons to receive

written notice of applications by U. S. Mail or by e-mail. To register, the interested person provides contact information to the Department of Community Development along with a fee to cover the cost of the notification. To remain on the mailing list, registration must be renewed every two years.

What is the procedure at a public hearing?

Public hearings are formal meetings and must be conducted as prescribed in the Code of Virginia and in the by-laws of the body conducting the hearing. There is a formal agenda that is arranged in advance, and the body conducting the hearing considers the agenda items in the order shown on the agenda. When the meeting reaches an agenda item that requires a public hearing, the chairman announces the hearing and a member of the town staff usually makes a brief presentation. Any person may appear at a public hearing and submit evidence, either individually or as a representative of a person or an organization. Each person who appears at a public hearing must state the person's name and address. If appearing on behalf of a person or organization, the speaker must also state the name and mailing address of the person or organization being represented. The applicant is allowed to speak first, because the burden of demonstrating that an application complies with applicable review and approval standards in the town code lies with the applicant. After the applicant has made comments, individual members of the public are allowed to speak for three minutes. The Chairman of the board holding the meeting will announce the amount of time allotted for comments if the speaker is representing an organization. When permission is granted by the chairman, the person wishing to speak should approach the podium. After everyone who wants to speak has done so, the chairman usually allows the applicant to respond to questions raised by the other members of the public. The hearing is then shifted from comments by the public to public discussion by the body holding the public hearing. Following *Roberts' Rules of Order*, a member of the body holding the public hearing makes a motion and all members vote on the motion. The vote determines whether the application is approved, denied, or deferred.

Meetings with public hearings are televised and videotaped on Herndon Community Television and the town meeting webcasts [web site](#) are recorded formally for legal documentation and reference. Therefore, comments of speakers at public hearings are recorded on audiotape and later transcribed for the official minutes of the meeting.

In addition, please visit the Town of Herndon web site at <http://www.herndon-va.gov/> to view live streaming of the public hearings.

How do I prepare to speak at a public hearing?

As a small town, Herndon officials always welcome speakers at public hearings and there are no specific requirements for preparing to speak. However, the town staff recommends:

- ☐ Contacting the Department of Community development to find out the date of the meeting when the public hearing for a specific application is scheduled.
- ☐ While not required, persons wishing to speak before the Town Council may sign up in advance with the Town Clerk (703-435-6804) to speak on a specific topic.
- ☐ Five days before the public hearing, contact the Department of Community Development to obtain a copy of the latest staff report on the application, which may help you formulate your questions and comments.
- ☐ If you are unable to attend a public hearing, written comments may be submitted for the public hearing, *at least one day in advance* of the public hearing by e-mail to: community.development@herndon-va.gov.
- ☐ Even if making an oral presentation, bring written comments to the public hearing. The speaker may then use the written comments for the speaker's oral presentation and may submit them to the Recording Secretary at the conclusion of the presentation.

Need more information?

Have a question regarding required permits, the permit process, or application requirements? Call (703) 787-7380 or send an e-mail to community.development@herndon-va.gov requesting an appointment to see a staff member in the Department of Community Development.

For questions regarding building permits or construction codes, call (703) 435-6850 or send an e-mail to buildinginspections@herndon-va.gov requesting an appointment to see the Building Official.

Visit the Planning and Zoning page on the Town's web site at www.herndon-va.gov to view the Department of Community Development web site for the Zoning Ordinance User Guide series or to access the town code. Town offices are located at the Herndon Municipal Center at 777 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia, 20170.

User's Guide to the Zoning Ordinance Series

1. Neighborhood Meetings and Public Participation in the Planning and Zoning Process
2. Zoning Map Amendments
3. Signs
4. Special Exceptions
5. Site Plan Review Procedures
6. Single Lot Development
7. Chesapeake Bay Provisions
8. Traffic Impact Studies
9. Subdivision Site Plans
10. Unified Commercial Subdivisions
11. Performance Guarantees
12. Heritage Preservation Regulations
13. Board of Zoning Appeals
14. Conducting a Business in the Home
15. Fences
16. Accessory Structures
17. Summary of Permitted and Allowed Uses in the Zoning Districts
18. Summary of Dimensional Standards in the Zoning Districts
19. Commercial Vehicle Parking in Residential Districts
20. Parking on Lots with Single-Family Detached Dwellings
21. Landscape and Buffer Requirements
22. Explanation of Variances, Waivers, Adjustments, and Exceptions
23. Fee Schedule
24. Temporary Use Permits, Special Events
25. Day Care, Child Care, Preschool and Home Day Care
26. Zoning Inspection and Zoning Appropriateness Permits
27. Written (Mailed) Notification to Adjacent Property Owners for Scheduled Public Hearings
28. Refuse Collection on Private Property
29. Exterior Lighting Standards
30. Vacating a Street Right-of-Way
31. Portable Storage Units
32. Building Location Surveys
33. Water Quality Impact Assessments
34. Chesapeake Bay Provisions for Homeowners: Step by Step Approval Process for Single-Family Detached and Duplex Dwellings
35. Roll-Off Dumpsters
36. Bed and Breakfast Establishments